**GEORGE GRENVILLE**

British Prime Minister George Grenville was the architect of tax laws designed to have the American Colonies shoulder a portion of British debt.

**George Grenville and British Debt**

Do you know someone who, once they make a decision, nothing can change their mind? Someone so stubborn that they continue to do the same thing over and over again and hope for a different outcome? According to historians, George Grenville 'excelled at doing the wrong thing - repeatedly' as British Prime Minister. In fact, some believe that Grenville was ultimately responsible for creating the conditions that led to the American Revolution.

A member of British Parliament since 1742, George Grenville became Prime Minister at the end of the Seven Years' War (1754-1763), which left Britain heavily in debt. Demonstrating his lack of finesse, Grenville called the American colonists the 'least taxed people in the world' and demanded they pay a higher share of the British war debt through taxes. Under Grenville's leadership, British officials came to view the American Colonies as a direct source of revenue.

**Grenville's Tax Schemes**

To extract more money from the Colonies, Grenville presided over a gaggle of new parliamentary tax measures. There were several, but we'll talk about three of the most significant:

* The Sugar Act of 1764 tightened the enforcement of colonial tax collection. Though it did reduce the tax on sugar, it taxed a number of new items for the first time. In Grenville's estimation, the Sugar Act would help pay for 'the necessary expenses of defending, protecting, and securing, the said colonies and plantations.'
* The Quartering Act of 1765 forced Americans to spend their own money to feed and house British troops stationed in the Colonies. The monetary burden, in addition to having soldiers in their houses, incensed the colonists.

* The Stamp Act of 1764 required that all official colonial business use stamped paper, which required the payment of a tax. This measure affected most every colonist.

These examples are only the major points of Grenville's tax schemes. There were others that attempted to squeeze more money out of America; however, many of these tax measures did the opposite of what Grenville sought. Instead of providing more revenue for the Crown, they cost more to enforce than it brought in to the royal treasury.

**American Resistance and the Fall of Grenville**

American colonists fought back strongly against Prime Minister Grenville's tax measures. They harassed tax collectors, boycotted British imports, and convened meetings and signed petitions to oppose the revenue laws. When colonists cried 'No taxation without representation!' Grenville called them 'ungrateful' and unappreciative of the benefits given them by the mother country.

Grenville's failed policies led to his dismissal as Prime Minister in July 1765. He demanded his fellow parliamentarians remain unapologetic.

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1. What steps did Grenville take to get the colonists to "like" his system of taxation?

2. How did the colonists react when Grenville (and the King) closed the Ohio-valley (Royal Proclamation of 1763)?

3. How did the colonists react to the Stamp Act? What happened to Grenville after this law was passed

4. How did Townshend's taxes differ from Grenville's taxes?

5. What items did he tax?

6. How did these taxes affect colonial merchants?

7. How did colonists react to the tax on tea?